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Atari Online News, Etc.  
A-ONE Online Magazine  
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor  
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor  
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor  
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"  
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"  
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"  
Rob Mahlert -- Web site  
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

Fred Horvat

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~ Asus Shoots for No. 3! ~ AOL Goes Specialized! ~ CBS Acquires Cnet!  
~ OLPC XO To Get Windows ~ Is The Browser Doomed? ~ WiiWare Launched!

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- * Missouri Woman Charged in Cyber Bully Case *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard           "Saying it like it is!"
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Yep, still feeling my age these days! I know, I've mentioned it a few times over the past few weeks, but by the time I sit down to put the final edition to rest for the week, it's all I can do to hold my head up to look at the monitor! But, it's getting a little better.

I'm making some headway getting the yard in shape, finally. Plenty to do still, but I'm seeing some light at the end of the tunnel. Now if the weather would cooperate, I could get things moving even faster.

I wish that I had a few ideas to put down on "paper" this week to take your minds off of the economy, politics, and various world events, but I just can't this week. Those are pretty hefty topics that would require my full attention and imagination to overcome! But, we can continue to do our part to minimize your pain - A-ONE is still free, and it comes your way every single week, rain or shine!

Until next time...

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->A-ONE User Group Notes!    -   Meetings, Shows, and Info!
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Reminder The CCAG 2008 Show Is May 24 2008!

Buy, sell, trade, play, and see classic video games, computers, peripherals, memorabilia, and more at the Classic Computing and Gaming Show (CCAG) on May 24, 2008 at the American Legion Hall--Clifton Post, 22001 Brookpark Rd, Fairview Park, OH from 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM.

Vendors, clubs, and collectors will be displaying and selling their retrogaming and retrocomputing goods, from Pong and Atari to Nintendo,

Apple and IBM to Commodore and everything in between with many set up for you to play with and explore. We have 4000+ square feet of space. Help us fill it all up!

For more information please go to <http://www.ccagshow.com/>

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING  
compiled by Joe Mirando  
[joe@atarinews.org](mailto:joe@atarinews.org)

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, another week has come and gone, and the Universe has given me another lesson in the "It never rains but it pours" department.

Last week I received a letter from the local water company telling me that it was time to change my water meter. Okay, I'm home most of the time now, so I called and made an appointment for them to come and change the meter. The water meter, the letter said, would be replaced at no cost to me.

"I'd like the guy to check the shut-off valve while he's here," I said, "since it's in pretty bad shape. It looks like it'll fall apart if you try to turn it."

"I'll have them check it," the woman told me, "but if they have to replace it, we'll have to charge you for it."

"Really?" I asked, "Even though it's degraded and corroded due to the crappy water you've been selling me?"

She got very quiet for a moment, then said, "Well, I'm afraid that's the way it's done."

Well, several days later, the guy came to replace the meter. After about 10 minutes, he came back upstairs, saying that he couldn't shut off the water because of the valve. "I've tried that Dubya-Dee spray and a pipe wrench, but I'm afraid that if I put any more pressure on it that I'll..."

"Snap the stem?" I finished for him.

"Exactly." He said. "I'm afraid that you're going to have to call and have them shut it off at the street so that we can change the inside valve. They charge for that, you know."

"Yeah, they told me."

So I called and made another appointment to have them come out and make sure they could turn the outside valve off. They came, dug up my front yard, and gave me the bad news... that valve too would have to be changed. The outside valve, they would not charge me for, but they WOULD charge me to come out and turn the outside valve off and on

again. Wellsir, they came out and replaced the outside valve, then replaced the inside valve, then replaced the water meter.

So, friends and neighbors, it ended up costing me more than two hundred bucks to have my water meter replaced for free. Yep. It never rains but it pours.

I WAS going to rant a little bit about politics and world events like skyrocketing oil prices, volcanoes and earthquakes, but unless you live in a cave, you already know about all that stuff. The thing that keeps working its way back into my mind is a quote from the movie THE BIRDS. "Aye, it's the end of the world."

Somehow, I don't think we're quite at that point yet, but I shudder to think about what might come next.

Well, that's enough of that for now. Let's tune in to the news, hints, tips and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup  
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Guillaume Tello asks for help with a bunch of cards in his MegaSTE:

"I have added the HD controller and a Vortex ATonce into my Mega STE. Since that, I can't get my NOVA graphic card to work!

I have tested the ET4000 board into a PC, it works fine. Is there something I have "moved", a jumper or else that can influence the VME?

I have made the tests again without the Vortex, nothing changes, the NOVA still is down. Has someone experienced a conflict between those pieces of hardware? Help!"

Jo Even Skarstein asks Guillaume:

"Does the TT/MSTE Nova have a separate 12V lead like the Falcon-version does? If so, it's possible that you've disturbed the 12V feed to the Nova when you installed the ATonce."

'Phantommm' takes the opportunity to jump in and ask:

"I have a Vortex ATonce in my Mega STE, the 386SX version with the optional Fast Ram. I'd like to find/get the 80387SX Co-Processor for it. Anyone have one?

I also have a NOVA Graphics Card (MSTE/TT) version, but have not installed it into my MegaSTE yet. Thought that the NOVA was a different board from the ET4000? I have a ET4000 board. But my NOVA is in a box case and without looking I think it is a MACH board. Maybe both are one in the same?

Will take a look and let ya know what board is attached to my Nova VME MSTe adapter.

My MSTE is a factory 4meg, TOS 2.06, with internal hard drive. Also has the High Density internal disk drive. I've had no problems with it and the ATonce 386SX.

I was going to install the NOVA, but want to put a Ethernet VME board in it. I'll try to order one, unless someone reading this has a working one for sale/trade.

My MegaST went bad which has put me off from upgrading the MSTE. Currently, I am going through all my Ataris, and upgrading, modifying and cleaning them.

As for your problem, Check all cables from your Graphics board to the VME for damage or loose connection. I don't recall if the Nova has a driver that must be installed without checking my manual. If so, I'd re-install it and boot up with only the necessary AUTO and ACC programs in case you have a software conflict.

Have you used NVDI in the past with your ET4000? Also, what version is the ATonce, is it a 286 or 386? Do you have the manual and software for it, if so what version is the software you are using?

I'll check my manual and software version and get back to you. You said, something about installing a HD Controller? Did your MSTE not have one already, or do you mean something like a Link 97?"

Guillaume replies:

" I have changed the two ribbons, [It's] not that..  
I reinstalled the software, not that either..

There was no internal HD support (a Mega STE Open).

Since yesterday, more problems came: now it can't see any of my ACSI units! Booh... Is it dying?"

Phantommm tells Guillaume:

"I still do not fully understand what you mean here.  
The Mega STE did not have the internal hard drive option and you added a internal hard drive controller? Or did you add a external hard drive controller, such as a ICD Link, Link 97, or etc?

Since your problems started when you added the HD Controller and Vortex, I would think that it has something to do with the HD Controller.

If I knew which one you added, it would help me understand your problem. The MSTE internal hard drive controller can be a little unstable if not connected firm and with good ribbon cables. Also, the MSTE does have switches that effect the internal hard drive controller board if I remember correctly, there is a DIP that has to be in the right selection to tell the Computer that the internal controller is connected.

I don't know if your MSTE came from the factory without the internal hard drive connector or not? Some were made without it.  
If you did not come with one, and you added one, then you may need to set a selector switch. I have the info here somewhere, will look it up

asap. But need to know what type of HD controller you connected and are trying to use? A internal unit connected to the motherboard? Or one connected to the Hard Drive Port on the back of the Mega STE?"

Piotr Mietniowski asks for help with his Eiffel interface:

"I have [a] problem updating my Eiffel interface. I downloaded [the] last version 1.10 Eiffel control panel. During the boot of my falcon with CT63 I have information on the screen:

"Eiffel 1.0.9 10/2004 and in the next line: Press fire during power-on for old firmware." What does it mean.

From this archive eiffel.lzh I loaded eiffel.hex and press program flash, when finished i closed this control panel and reboot my falcon, but no change during the run of falcon I see the same information like previously.

The second problem is in the joystick I observed that in few games (for example Goods) the fire is not active.

Does anybody know what the problem is?"

Dave Wade shares the sorrow:

"I seem to have issues with "Fire" as well."

Piotr tells Dave that his...

"Joystick is OK because it works fine in a clean falcon without Eiffel."

Sebastian Pohl posts this about a mod:

"I just got a bunch of pictures of an interesting 19" Atari modification. The unit housing the atari itself is 3 units high, the one with the screen is 6 units high. It was used for music recording, a cubase dongle is still plugged in. Does anyone know what this thing really is and what it is worth and where i can find someone that really will appreciate this thingie? :)

pictures:

<http://www.twisted-artwork.de/pics/atari1.JPG>  
<http://www.twisted-artwork.de/pics/atari2.JPG>  
<http://www.twisted-artwork.de/pics/atari3.JPG> "

Michael Bernstein tells Sebastian:

"As I read 19" Atari i remember a project from a german electronic magazine ELRAD (from 1992) which rebuild a Mega ST to a 19" version.

Your pictures show a atari with housing. Because the ELRAD project did only show the 3 cards, i did not see, if your project was based on the ELRAD project."

Well folks, that's it for this time around. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Nintendo Launches WiiWare!  
    " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " "  
                                   Nintendo's Wii Fit Wants  
                                   You Off The Couch!
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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News      -   The Latest Gaming News!
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## Nintendo Launches WiiWare

Nintendo has launched a new channel for games distribution WiiWare <<http://wiiware.com>>. Games are downloaded over the internet by redeeming WiiPoints, which can be purchased at the Wii Shop Channel or at retail outlets...the benefit to this system being that kids can buy the points over the counter with cash rather than relying on an adult with a credit card (although there are parental controls). The intention is to give smaller games developers a channel to sell their wares other than the expensive retail distribution methods: "WiiWare is to the video game industry what independent films are to Hollywood," said Cammie Dunaway, Nintendo of America's executive vice president of Sales & Marketing, using an analogy that doesn't really fit but gets the idea across. WiiWare is being described as Nintendo's answer to Microsoft's Xbox Live Arcade and Sony's PlayStation Store, although it has launched with 8 games in Europe and 6 in the US has descriptions and prices for the games)...New games, at various Wii Point values, will be added to WiiWare on Mondays.

## Nintendo's Latest Game Wants You Off The Couch

Sumo wrestlers were the main inspiration behind Wii Fit, Nintendo's latest attempt at getting you off the couch when you play video games.

Because they are so huge, sumo wrestlers need two scales to weigh themselves. Wii Fit's balance board works kind of like two scales fused together, which, as its designers found, makes it instantly more fun than just one. The game has sold more than 2 million copies in Japan and

it's been a hit in Europe. Nintendo Co. hopes to recreate that success when Wii Fit goes on sale in the U.S. on Monday.

In the U.S., pre-launch buzz around the game - whose activities range from yoga to snowboarding - is reminiscent of the Wii's debut. The console, initially elusive in stores and online, is still often in short supply a year and a half after its release.

Wii Fit, which costs \$89.99, is currently sold out in pre-launch sales on Amazon.com and the Web sites of retailers GameStop Corp. and Wal-Mart Stores Inc., while Best Buy Co.'s Web site lists it as "coming soon."

"Our main premise in creating Wii Fit was (to) create a game that allows you to check your weight," Shigeru Miyamoto, the legendary game designer behind Mario and Zelda, told The Associated Press through a translator during a recent visit to the U.S.

Miyamoto, 55, started checking his weight daily about five years ago, a few years after he began exercising to stay healthy. Tracking his progress, he said, was fun and his family soon caught the bug.

"We ended up buying a brand new scale, and I started thinking that if there was a way I could weigh myself in the living room and make a product out of it, that would be something everybody could relate to," Miyamoto said.

With the scale as a launching pad, Miyamoto and Wii Fit's other developers added balance-based fitness activities and games. In one, you play a penguin trying to catch fish in the air while balancing on a block of ice. Like the Wii's motion-sensitive wireless controller, Wii Fit's balance board is intuitive and takes no video game skills to master.

During play the balance board becomes a snowboard, skis or a tightrope. The game's fitness regimen includes yoga, aerobics and strength training, as well as tracking of your weight and body mass index. You can even jog without the board, holding the Wii's wireless controller in your hand. The exercises start in one- or two-minute spurts, so you don't overextend yourself, and you progress to new levels as you get more proficient.

The goal of Wii Fit, Miyamoto said, is simply to get people to think more consciously about their health.

Instead of going after core-gamers - the "Grand Theft Auto" audience of boys and young men - Nintendo has been roping in the whole family, including moms and grandmothers, and getting them playing (and buying) the Wii.

Wii Fit seems to be expanding the Wii's audience even more. In Japan, between 30 percent and 40 percent of people who bought Wii Fit also bought a video game system for the first time, according to Miyamoto.

Mike Hickey, an analyst with Janco Partners, said Wii Fit exemplifies how the appeal of video gaming has expanded.

"It's becoming less threatening, easier to digest," Hickey said.

The game's launch outside the holiday season may also show the industry is maturing into a form of mainstream entertainment. While game companies still make most of their money around the holidays, Hickey and



other analysts expects this to change.

"There is no reason you have to be tied to the holiday months any more," he said. "Like the movie business (games are) a legitimate form of entertainment in the non-Christmas tree months."

While some in the industry have questioned how long Nintendo can keep its momentum - after all, more casual gamers may not want to spend every spare dollar on a new video game - analysts are upbeat.

"I don't think we even had the imagination a year ago that Wii Fit could be compared to 'Grand Theft Auto,'" Hickey said, referring to the popular crime game franchise, whose latest installment shattered sales records when it hit store shelves last month.

If U.S. sales compare to Japan's, Hickey said Wii Fit will likely sell about 3 million copies in its first couple of months, depending on supply constraints.

Cammie Dunaway, executive vice president of sales and marketing at Nintendo of America, said people have responded in "unprecedented numbers to retailers' pre-sales." While the game sold out online, Dunaway said Nintendo wants to ensure there is a "healthy balance" between brick and mortar stores and online pre-orders.

With its exercise components, weight and body mass index tracking (as well as gentle nudging when you don't exercise for a few days) Wii Fit can certainly sound more like a health gadget than a game. In Miyamoto's eyes, however, it's a video game.

"In my mind anything that lets you interact on a TV screen, technically speaking, is a video game," he said. "But it's true that with Wii Fit you are doing things that you typically don't do, like checking your weight."

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A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

### OpenOffice 3.0 Public Beta Released

OpenOffice.org said Wednesday that it had made the beta version of OpenOffice 3.0 available for download. The organization recommended that beta users not use the software for production, however; you have been warned.

What's new? "The most immediately visible change to OpenOffice.org 3.0 is the new 'Start Centre', new fresh-looking icons, and a new zoom control in the status bar," according to OpenOffice.org. "A closer look shows that 3.0 has a myriad of new features. Notable Calc improvements include a new solver component; support for spreadsheet

collaboration through workbook sharing; and an increase to 1024 columns per sheet. Writer has an improved notes feature and displays of multiple pages while editing. There are numerous Chart enhancements, and an improved crop feature in Draw and Impress."

"Behind the scenes, OpenOffice.org 3.0 will support the upcoming OpenDocument Format (ODF) 1.2 standard, and is capable of opening files created with MS-Office 2007 or MS-Office 2008 for Mac OS X (.docx, .xlsx, .pptx, etc.)," the group added. "This is in addition to read and write support for the MS-Office binary file formats (.doc, .xls, .ppt, etc.). "

The new release is also Mac-friendly, running on Mac OS X without X11, with the look and feel of any other Aqua application, the developer group said.

### Fedora 9 Released

I'm a confirmed Ubuntu fan, but I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the release of Fedora 9 this morning. Fedora is the community-maintained Linux distribution that's the foundation for Red Hat Enterprise Linux (RHEL), the leading commercial version of the open source OS. No surprise, then, that it has a tremendous following.

You can think of Fedora as a testing-ground for RHEL; it's where you can find the latest cutting-edge features before they make their way out to the officially-supported distribution. That means it's really best suited for hobbyists, but it's also a good way to get the jump on the best that Linux has to offer.

The biggest change for this release is the inclusion of KDE 4, the most recent edition of the desktop software that powers Fedora. (Ubuntu, on the other hand, uses the competing Gnome by default.) KDE 4 brings new icons and changes under the hood that should make Fedora run faster and use less memory than earlier versions.

Fedora also now joins Ubuntu in shipping Firefox 3, which is still currently in beta - so be prepared for some plug-in difficulties until third-party developers get their add-ons up to speed.

Other changes include support for the new ext4 filesystem, the ability to resize Linux and Windows partitions at install time, built-in support for encrypted filesystems, and improvements to how Fedora handles Xen virtual machines - not to mention the usual host of bugfixes. For a visual tour of the new release, check out the official slideshows.

You can download Fedora 9 from one of the official servers now. Torrent files are available in addition to the regular disc images; or - in another change for this release - you can use Jigdo, a distribution system that helps speed up large downloads by breaking them into smaller chunks (somewhat like BitTorrent).

Asus plans to be the No. 3 laptop maker in the world in six years.

Pretty ambitious, considering that many Americans probably have never heard of the Taipei, Taiwan-based company.

Asus' big goal rides on a tiny product: a hugely successful, itty-bitty laptop called the Eee PC. It's a bit larger than a tissue box, weighs just 2 pounds and starts at the bargain-basement price of \$299.

There's nothing quite like it on the market. Buyers - many of them early adopters - are snapping up Eee PCs almost as fast as Asus can make them. The company expects to sell nearly 2 million in the first six months of the year. They're available at Best Buy, Amazon and many local retailers.

This week, Asus launches a \$549 version with a bigger screen and more features. A desktop version is on the way, probably this summer, says Jackie Hsu, president of Asus' U.S. division. More Eee products are on the drawing board.

The company has helped create a new type of computer - a laptop that's both small and inexpensive, says tech analyst Bob O'Donnell at researcher IDC.

Asus made 81% of the laptops that sold for less than \$500 last year, but its good times probably won't last, O'Donnell says. Just about every PC maker is considering its own tiny, inexpensive laptop. That means that little Asus - the No. 9 PC maker in the world - could soon face competition from giants Hewlett-Packard, Dell and Acer, he says.

The market will grow, but not fast enough to generate numerous big successes, O'Donnell says. "Asus has gained a lot of mindshare for such a little company. But they're going to be under a lot more pressure."

The market for sub-\$500 laptops was marginal until 2007, when 430,000 were sold, O'Donnell says. That number is expected to jump to 3.6 million this year, with the vast majority of sales in the USA and Asia.

That's a surprise. Cheap, small laptops were rare until a non-profit group, One Laptop Per Child, started cranking out student-size computers in 2007 that sold for about \$200. They were designed for a limited market, mainly schools in developing nations. So were similar computers from a rival project, Classmate PC.

In the USA, Japan and other developed nations, most small laptops remained high-end business models that sold for a premium. Lenovo's 2.4-pound IdeaPad U110 starts at \$1,899, while Sony's 1.2-pound Vaio UX starts at \$2,500, for example.

Asus changed that. It took the same low-cost model employed by OLPC and used it to create a computer that shoppers in developed countries wanted to buy.

Hsu says few tech-savvy Americans would use the Eee PC as their primary laptop. One midrange, \$399 model has a 7-inch screen and a keyboard that feels cramped to adult hands. Its 900-MHz Intel Celeron processor is much less powerful than those found in most laptops. And its 4-GB hard drive is only as big as Apple's (AAPL) smallest iPod. But it's just fine for e-mail or simple Web surfing - which makes the Eee PC a great backup laptop to take on the road, Hsu says. It's also a good gift for kids or

elderly parents, he says.

Asus tried to compensate for the Eee PC's technical shortcomings with an easy-to-use interface that appeals to this audience. The original Eee PC offered games, Web browsing and other features on a simple screen layout, based on the open-source Linux operating system. The company later released a version running Microsoft's Windows XP.

Asus' parent company, AsusTek, used to be best known for making motherboards, a crucial if unsexy component in every PC.

AsusTek also manufactured computers for Apple, Sony, Hewlett-Packard and others behind the scenes. That's fairly common. Many brand-name companies focus on design and marketing, and hire outside factories to do at least part of the manufacturing.

AsusTek also sold laptops under its own name. But that market was limited, partly because its manufacturing customers didn't want the competition.

AsusTek addressed that issue this year by becoming a holding company, with three separate firms underneath. Pegatron makes components and does manufacturing for other companies. Unihaan makes plastic computer cases and other parts. And the renamed Asus builds products it sells under its own name, such as the Eee PC.

The change hasn't alienated manufacturing customers so far, Hsu says. "We think it's OK. Orders haven't fallen," he says.

Asus has also rolled out cellphones, Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and home networking gear. It's considering expanding into any product that combines computing, communications and electronics. "We want to grow," Hsu says.

But rivals will soon start moving onto Asus' turf, says tech analyst Martin Reynolds at researcher Gartner. One potentially huge threat: Apple. The company behind the iPod "has been looking really hard at the future," Reynolds says. "You could see Apple notebooks getting really low in price."

It's unlikely that Asus will be able to win by cutting costs. Even cheap laptops cost about \$200 to make, O'Donnell says. (Asus' non-Eee laptops sell for an average price of \$1,250.)

Hsu, a longtime Asus executive who came to the USA last year, already knows how to sound like an American business leader. "We hope to see more competitors come in. We want a big pie," he says.

The question is how big the pie will get. O'Donnell says many companies are overestimating it.

But O'Donnell and others agree that the PC market will never be the same again. "Low-cost laptops are here to stay," Reynolds says.

#### CBS Acquires Cnet To Expand Its Online Audience

CBS Corp. will spend \$1.8 billion to purchase Cnet Networks, a

technology news site, the broadcaster announced Thursday. CBS will pay \$11.50 per share in an all-cash deal. The acquisition puts CBS on the top 10 list of U.S. Internet sites, the company said, with 54 million unique visitors per month.

Leslie Moonves, president and CEO of CBS, said the Cnet acquisition will add a platform to extend CBS's online content to a "whole new global audience."

Moonves said the combined company will have "significant additional exposure to the fastest-growing advertising sector and can accelerate [the company's] growth through a number of new content, promotion and advertising initiatives."

Cnet's flagship publication is a general tech-news site, but its broader network also offers technical information through its ZDNet and TechRepublic properties. It also owns the MySimon online shopping tool and other sites for the entertainment and lifestyle markets.

Cnet's sites will be integrated into the CBS Interactive Group, which includes mainstream entertainment, news and sports sites, as well as music webcaster last.fm, finance show Wallstrip, and MobLogic.

"The whole thing gives CBS an expanded reach. Cnet is an attractive brand and its ZDNet asset gives it international reach," said Greg Sterling, principal analyst with Sterling Market Research. The acquisition is "consistent with CBS trying to extend its reach online and bolster its traditional media."

What does CBS want with a technology-focused brand like Cnet? The key is Cnet's strength in consumer technology. "While its leading brands are very tech-focused, it's a trusted name in consumer technology, which extends to a whole range of things," Sterling said. Indeed, consumer technology is rapidly becoming synonymous with entertainment, as evidenced by the entertainment-fueled growth of Apple.

Still, Cnet comes to CBS with some negatives. Cnet recently laid off 10 percent of its staff in a cost-cutting measure and the company badly squandered an early opportunity with its MySimon price-comparison tool, Sterling said.

Writing in The New York Times, Saul Hansell suggested that Cnet may be forced to hand over its prized News.com domain name to CBS News. In that case, some News.com reporters might find themselves redundant.

What will be the impact of the acquisition on IT readers of Cnet's sites? "I don't think it will have any immediate impact," Sterling said. "If over time CBS diminishes its credibility somehow, that may change. But in a way its good for Cnet to be acquired by an organization with a rich journalistic pedigree. CBS has some interest in journalistic credibility compared to some other organizations." And, he said, "CBS gets some content [with Cnet] that may be interesting in other ways."

The deal has been approved by Cnet's board and is expected to be completed in the third quarter of this year.

Yahoo Inc. Chief Executive Jerry Yang spent months fending off Microsoft Corp.'s unsolicited takeover bid. Now he may only have a few weeks to persuade the software maker to revive its last offer of \$47.5 billion, or risk being fired in a shareholder mutiny led by activist investor Carl Icahn.

Spurred on by outraged shareholders, Icahn notified Yahoo Thursday that he will lead a revolt to oust Yang and the rest of the Internet company's board unless they renew negotiations with Microsoft that fell apart May 3 when the two sides couldn't agree on a price.

To pressure Yahoo, Icahn has nominated an alternate slate of directors to replace the current board in an election scheduled July 3 at Yahoo's annual meeting. If the uprising is successful, an Icahn-led board presumably would fire Yang as CEO and try to negotiate a sale to Microsoft.

To gain leverage in the looming battle, Icahn revealed that he has spent more than \$1 billion snapping up 59 million Yahoo shares and options to give him a 4.3 percent stake in the Sunnyvale-based company. He plans to seek approval from the Federal Trade Commission to acquire up to \$2.5 billion in Yahoo stock, including his current holdings.

Icahn's challenge opens a dramatic new chapter in a saga that began Jan. 31 when Microsoft stunned Yahoo with a takeover bid that started out at \$44.6 billion, or \$31 per share, and then rose to \$47.5 billion, or \$33 per share, earlier this month.

The showdown now features at least five billionaires with diverse agendas:

Yang and fellow Yahoo co-founder David Filo, who believe Yahoo is worth at least \$53 billion; Icahn and basketball team owner Mark Cuban, who has agreed to help shake up the company that made him rich; and Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer, who, until recently at least, viewed Yahoo as a key weapon in his crusade to topple Internet search and advertising leader Google Inc.

Hoping to seal the deal, Ballmer orally offered to buy Yahoo \$33 per share. But Yang and Filo - speaking on behalf of Yahoo's board - sought \$37 per share, a price the stock hasn't reached in more than two years. The impasse prompted Ballmer to withdraw the bid.

In a letter sent Thursday to Yahoo Chairman Roy Bostock, Icahn lambasted the board's actions as "irresponsible" and "unconscionable," given that Yahoo's stock stood at \$19.18 before Microsoft first made its bid. He urged the board to reopen the talks.

"I believe that a combination between Microsoft and Yahoo is by far the most sensible path for both companies," Icahn wrote.

A Yahoo representative said the company would respond to Icahn "soon."

Yahoo shares rose 61 cents, or 2.3 percent, to finish Thursday at \$27.75. That's the stock's highest closing price since Microsoft broke off talks.

While Icahn made it clear he wants Yahoo sold to Microsoft, there are no guarantees the software maker is still interested in buying its rival.

A Microsoft spokesman declined to comment on Icahn's letter, saying the Redmond, Wash.-based company has "moved on."

Besides Icahn, the alternate slate of nominees includes Cuban, who sold Broadcast.com to Yahoo for \$8.1 billion in stock in 1999. Cuban used part of his Yahoo windfall to buy the Dallas Mavericks, a National Basketball Association franchise that he still owns. He called upon Yahoo to sell to Microsoft in a February blog posting.

If Yahoo can't find a way to placate Icahn, the battle threatens to distract Yahoo and the rest of the company's management from their turnaround efforts, said James Post, a Boston University professor specializing in corporate governance and ethics.

"Senior management cannot concentrate on managing the business when they are concentrating on managing critical relationships with angry shareholders," Post said.

And there's no doubt Yahoo shareholders are furious, said Darren Chervitz, co-portfolio manager of the Jacob Internet Fund, which owns about 100,000 Yahoo shares.

"There's a strong feeling that Yang and the board did not do their fiduciary duty," Chervitz said. "They had a very strong offer on the table and did everything to brush it aside, if not sabotage it."

Paulson & Co., a New York hedge fund that owns 50 million Yahoo shares, said Thursday that it will back Icahn's alternate slate of directors if Yahoo's board doesn't negotiate a sale to Microsoft.

Icahn has a long history of challenging corporate boards overseeing troubled companies. Most recently, he has forced major changes at Blockbuster Inc. and Motorola Inc. He also played a pivotal role in the recent \$8.5 billion sale of business software maker BEA Systems Inc. to rival Oracle Corp., which dropped an earlier bid of \$6.7 billion.

The billionaire investor's other notable nominees to the Yahoo board include: venture capitalist Adam Dell, whose brother, Michael, founded Dell Inc.; and Frank Biondi Jr., the former chief executive of Viacom Inc.

Icahn also recruited two nominees that Microsoft reportedly lined up for a possible hostile takeover attempt that never materialized. Those two are advertising executive Edward Grey and former Nextel Partners CEO John Chapple.

The revolt threatens to jettison Yang, 39, from the company that he started with Filo, 41, while they were graduate students at Stanford University 14 years ago. Together, Yang and Filo still own 134 million Yahoo shares, or nearly 10 percent of the company.

Yang has argued Yahoo eventually will be worth more than Microsoft's last offer if it can expand its share of a rapidly growing Internet advertising market. He has pledged to boost Yahoo's net revenue growth by 25 percent in 2009 and 2010 - well above the company's recent pace of 12 percent.

"It is irresponsible to hide behind management's more than overly optimistic financial forecasts," Icahn wrote Bostock.

Although Ballmer and other Microsoft executives have been saying

publicly they don't need to buy Yahoo to bolster the company's unprofitable Internet operations, many analysts have dismissed the statements as posturing.

Collins Stewart analyst Sandeep Aggarwal believes Microsoft will eventually buy Yahoo for \$33 or \$34 per share. The "body language from Yahoo and Microsoft do not suggest that both companies have really moved on," Aggarwal wrote in a Thursday research note.

If the two companies really abandoned hope for a deal, Aggarwal reasons they would have already announced other moves indicating they were heading in a new direction.

For instance, Yahoo has been discussing a possible advertising partnership with Google for weeks without agreeing to a deal. And if Microsoft weren't still interested in Yahoo, Aggarwal believes the company would have already announced another acquisition or "radical changes" in its strategy for building a more compelling Internet search engine.

#### AOL Sheds Its Brand To Draw Specialty Audiences

Unless you're looking carefully, you'll likely miss the fact that the new Asylum Web site for young men is a creation of Time Warner Inc.'s AOL. Same for WalletPop on personal finance, Spinner on indie music and StyleList on fashion.

The AOL brand is taking a back seat as the company long associated with dial-up Internet access for the masses quietly launches dozens of sites targeted at specialized audiences.

AOL figures that to grow its audiences - and draw additional advertising the company crucially needs to offset plunging revenue from its shrinking base of Internet access subscribers - it must break from a one-size-fits-all model and let its specialty sites set their own designs and editorial tone, shedding the AOL brand when necessary.

Bill Wilson, AOL's executive vice president for vertical programming, said the company has been retaining the AOL name for some sites - AOL Body is one, after research showed women 25 and up respond well to the brand.

And the brand isn't completely invisible even if AOL isn't part of the site's name. There's usually a small AOL logo somewhere, along with links to other AOL sites. The right mix, Wilson said, is the product of research on what makes the most sense for consumers.

Take Asylum, which has grown into a leading site for young men since its December launch. The name was chosen partly to convey humor and irreverence.

"If we put it out as AOL Men, we got the feedback it wouldn't connect," said Mike Rich, a senior vice president who oversees Asylum and other specialty sites. "People just didn't connect this type of content with the AOL brand."

Wilson said AOL's unbranding can help potential visitors know that the site isn't part of its subscription service, which AOL started breaking



down in late 2004 in favor of free, ad-supported sites.

AOL parent Time Warner was more blunt in a regulatory filing:

"If AOL cannot effectively build a portfolio of alternate brands that are appealing to Internet consumers, AOL may have difficulty in increasing the engagement of Internet consumers on its Web products and services. AOL believes that the 'AOL' brand is associated in the minds of consumers with its dial-up Internet access service."

AOL is by no means alone in promoting alternative brands.

Google Inc. has its homegrown Orkut social-networking service alongside its Picasa photo products and YouTube video-sharing site, both brands that came in through acquisitions. On the other hand, the Keyhole brand disappeared when Google bought the mapping concern, which became Google Earth.

Yahoo Inc., meanwhile, has Flickr photos and recently launched Shine for women.

Microsoft Corp. has a slew of brand names, including MSN, Hotmail and Live.

But unbranding represents a reversal for AOL after it tried to make its Moviefone and Netscape acquisitions more AOL-like. Type in "Moviefone.com," for instance, and you're automatically redirected to "movies.aol.com."

"AOL currently implies legacy. It implies old. It implies out of date," said Rob Enderle, an industry analyst with the Enderle Group. "If you want to attract a new, young audience to a site, attaching 'AOL' is probably a kiss of death. They are wise to use the new individual property brands."

#### Windows To Run on One Laptop Per Child Computer

Microsoft Corp reached an agreement to make available its Windows operating System software for the One Laptop Per Child Foundation's XO Laptop, the company said on Thursday.

Microsoft was not part of the project started by Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Nicholas Negroponte to develop an inexpensive laptop computer for elementary school children in developing countries.

In recent months, the two sides have engaged in more serious talks and started testing the XO Laptop's Sugar software package on Microsoft's Windows operating system, which runs on more than 90 percent of the world's computers.

Microsoft said it plans to start trials of Windows on the low-cost laptop in key emerging markets as early as June. Customers will be able to choose to run the computer on either a Windows or a Linux operating system.

Sugar was designed only to work with a free Linux operating system that engineers from Red Hat Inc. Eventually, the goal will be to develop versions of the laptop to run both Linux and Windows, leaving the user

to decide which operating system to run when the machine boots up, Negroponte said.

Sugar is a suite of educational software that includes a user interface for the green-and-white machines with a display that switches from color to black-and-white for viewing in direct sunlight.

### Craigslist Sues eBay, Alleges Corporate Spy Plan

Online classifieds leader Craigslist.com filed a countersuit on Tuesday against business rival eBay Inc, alleging eBay had used its minority stake in Craigslist to steal corporate trade secrets.

In a lawsuit filed in California Superior Court in San Francisco, Craigslist challenged allegations in an eBay suit filed in Delaware state court in April that accused Craigslist of discriminating against eBay as a shareholder.

eBay's suit in Delaware Chancery Court charged Craigslist had used "clandestine meetings" to dilute eBay's 28.4 percent stake in Craigslist to 24.85, or less than a quarter of the company.

A spokeswoman for eBay was not immediately available to comment on Craigslist's countersuit.

In addition to unfair competition and fraudulent business claims, the countersuit accuses eBay of copyright infringement and using misleading advertising on Google to run ads for its rival Kijiji site that appeared to be Craigslist ads.

The lawsuit demands that eBay restore all shares of Craigslist owned by eBay or for the court to require eBay to divest its holdings in Craigslist. The suit asks for a cut of eBay profits and for punitive damages.

eBay, the world leader in online auctions and payment services, took a minority ownership stake in Craigslist nearly four years ago as part of a strategy to buy up classified advertising services both in the United States and Europe.

In 2004, eBay began to expand into the market through the acquisition of online classified businesses Marktplaats and later, LoQuo and Gumtree. In 2005, eBay launched its own free online classifieds site named Kijiji in nearly a dozen markets in Europe and Asia. A year ago, it entered the United States.

Kijiji operates in hundreds of German cities and is popular in countries ranging from France to Italy to India and Taiwan.

Craigslist's complaint alleges a plot by eBay to use its position as a minority shareholder in Craigslist and its position on the board to pressure Craigslist into a full-scale acquisition deal by eBay.

Barring that, Craigslist argues that eBay used its position to gather competitive information that led to the launch of eBay's rival classifieds business. It charges eBay code-named this its "Craigslist killer" in internal strategy discussions.

"In the months leading up to the launch of its competing Kijiji site ... eBay used its shareholder status to plant on Craigslist's board of directors the individual responsible for launching and/or operating Kijiji," the latest suit alleges.

### MySpace Wins \$230 Million Anti-Spam Judgment

A notorious "Spam King" and his partner now owe MySpace about \$230 million in damages after a federal judge awarded the popular online hangout what is believed to be the largest anti-spam judgment ever.

The judgment is a big victory for MySpace, although service providers often have a tough time collecting such awards. But even if the News Corp.-owned site never collects, it hopes the judgment deters other spammers.

"Anybody who's been thinking about engaging in spam are going to say, 'Wow, I better not go there,'" MySpace's chief security officer, Hemanshu Nigam, told The Associated Press on Tuesday. "Spammers don't want to be prosecuted. They are there to make money. It's our job to send a message to stop them."

U.S. District Judge Audrey B. Collins in Los Angeles ruled in MySpace's favor Monday after Sanford Wallace and Walter Rines failed to show up for a court hearing.

Wallace earned the monikers "Spam King" and "Spamford" as head of a company that sent as many as 30 million junk e-mails a day in the 1990s. He left that company, Cyber Promotions, following lawsuits from leading Internet service providers such as Time Warner Inc.'s AOL, only to re-emerge in a spyware case that led to a \$4 million federal judgment against him in 2006.

"MySpace has zero tolerance for those who attempt to act illegally on our site," Nigam said in a statement. "We remain committed to punishing those who violate the law and try to harm our members."

Nigam told the AP that Wallace and Rines created their own MySpace accounts or took over existing ones by stealing passwords through "phishing" scams.

They then e-mailed other MySpace members, he said, "asking them to check out a cool video or another cool site. When you (got) there, they were making money trying to sell you something or making money based on hits or trying to sell ring tones."

MySpace said the pair sent more than 730,000 messages to MySpace members, many made to look like they were coming from trusted friends, giving them an air of legitimacy. Under the 2003 federal anti-spam law known as CAN-SPAM, each violation entitles MySpace to \$100 in damages, tripled when conducted "willfully and knowingly."

In court papers, MySpace said the activities resulted in bandwidth and delivery-related costs, along with complaints from hundreds of users. The company also said some of the outside Web sites contained adult material, potentially harming teens who use MySpace.

The Los Angeles-based company described the amount of the award as a "landmark."

John Levine, a board member for the anti-spam advocacy group Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial Email, said that past spam judgments he knows of have been in the tens of millions of dollars.

There was no telephone listing for Wallace in the Las Vegas area, to which he moved in 2004 to pursue night club promotion work. Service was disconnected for two listed numbers for Rines in Stratham, N.H., his last known address; a third number in Stratham was unlisted.

Collins awarded the amounts sought by MySpace: \$157.4 million jointly against Rines and Wallace and an additional \$63.4 million against Rines under CAN-SPAM - plus \$1.5 million more against the pair under California's anti-phishing law and \$4.7 million in attorneys fees. MySpace said it was entitled to another \$3 million from Rines and Wallace under a different section of CAN-SPAM.

Collins also issued injunctions barring similar activities in the future.

MySpace has another anti-spam case pending against a high-profile defendant, Scott Richter, who it claims gained access to MySpace profiles using stolen passwords and then sent spam bulletins from those accounts.

MySpace said the junk messages from Wallace and Rines came after Richter's.

#### Missouri Woman Charged in 'Cyber-Bully' Case

A Missouri woman whose online taunting was blamed in the 2006 suicide of her 13-year-old neighbor now faces criminal charges.

A grand jury on Thursday handed up an indictment charging Lori Drew, 49, of O'Fallon, Missouri, which is 30 miles west of St. Louis, with one count of conspiracy and three counts of unauthorized computer access. A federal grand jury in California heard the case because that is where MySpace, the Web site where the taunting occurred, is located.

Drew, her teenage daughter and a third woman, Ashley Grills, who worked for the Drew family, reportedly created a MySpace.com profile under the fictional name Josh Evans in order to taunt Megan Meier, who had been a friend of Drew's daughter and lived on the same block.

"After approximately four weeks of flirtatious communications between Josh Evans and [Meier], Drew and her co-conspirators broke off the relationship," the U.S. Attorney for the Central District of California said in a statement. "Within an hour [Meier] hanged herself in her room. She died the next day."

Drew was vilified after the incident, which drew international attention. In a February 2008 interview she claimed to have been barraged with threatening calls after the story broke, and her address and phone number were posted online.

## Is The Browser Doomed?

Since its inception, the Web has been synonymous with the browser. Pundits hailed NCSA Mosaic as "the killer app of the Internet" in 1993, and today's browsers share an unbroken lineage from that humble beginning.

Today's Web sites are another matter, however. Gone are the static pages and limited graphics of 15 years ago. In their place are lush, highly interactive experiences, as visually rich as any desktop application. The Web has become the preferred platform for enterprise application delivery, to say nothing of online entertainment and social software. In response, new kinds of online experiences have begun to emerge, challenging old notions of what it means to browse the Web.

Take Twhirl, a desktop client for the Twitter online service. Double-click its icon and the application launches in seconds. Its window is small and stylized, with an attractive, irregular border and configurable color schemes. What few controls it has are convenient and easy to use. It's sleek, fast, and unobtrusive. In short, it's everything that navigating to the Twitter Web site with a browser is not.

But don't be fooled. Although it looks and feels like an ordinary desktop application, Twhirl's UI is rendered with HTML, CSS, Flash, and ActionScript. Essentially, it's a Web app.

Twhirl is built on Adobe AIR, which has a lightweight client library that allows Web developers to use familiar tools and languages to build first-class desktop applications. Software created with AIR is fully interactive and network-enabled, with a rich UI. But unlike traditional Web applications, AIR apps gain the immediacy and user engagement that come from running outside the browser window.

"The browser is terrific for transient experiences - things that a user might do once in a while, or for a short amount of time," says Ed Rowe, director of AIR engineering at Adobe. A frequently accessed service like Twitter, on the other hand, cries out for a lightweight client. AIR allows the same developers to build both.

But AIR is only one branch in the Web's ongoing evolution. Already, Google, NetSuite, Salesforce.com, Zoho, and others are using Web tools and infrastructure to deliver full-fledged enterprise software, defying the limitations of today's browsers. As the static Web gives way to RIAs (rich Internet applications), client software must continue to adapt and evolve; and in some cases, this could very well mean stepping beyond the traditional browser altogether.

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